

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION
WASHINGTON, DC

ORDER

Selection of six unmanned aircraft systems test sites in accordance with FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012, PL-112-95

ORDER

Pursuant to the FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012, PL-112-95 (“FMRA”), I am responsible for selecting six unmanned aircraft systems (“UAS”) test sites.

In 2012 Congress passed the FMRA and directed the FAA to take a series of actions to accelerate the integration of UAS into the national airspace system (“NAS”). Among other actions, the FMRA requires the FAA Administrator to establish a program to integrate UAS at six test sites.

Section 332(c) of the FMRA provides that the FAA Administrator must do the following before selecting the location of the six test sites:

- (A) take into consideration geographic and climatic diversity;
- (B) take into consideration the location of ground infrastructure and research needs; and
- (C) consult with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and Department of Defense.

After the FMRA was enacted, the FAA sought public input on what criteria and processes the FAA should use to select the Test Sites. To this end, the FAA published a Request for Comments [Docket No. FAA-2012-0252] in the *Federal Register* on March 9, 2012 and hosted two public webinars in April 2012. The FAA then considered the public input it received and finalized its plan for selecting the six test sites.

Ultimately, the FAA elected to implement the test site program by selecting six non-federal, public entities to operate the test sites with appropriate FAA oversight. To select the six test sites, the FAA solicited proposals from eligible entities interested in establishing test sites and consulted with representatives of both the Department of Defense and the National Aeronautics and Space Agency in evaluating the proposals. The Test Site Solicitation set out the proposal

instructions and the factors the FAA would use to evaluate proposals and select the six test sites. The selection factors included the factors required by Section 332(c) of the FMRA—geographic diversity, climatic diversity, the location of ground infrastructure, and research needs—as well as additional factors that would help the FAA select test sites where UAS can be safely and efficiently integrated into the NAS.


After applying the selection factors in the Test Site Solicitation, I have selected the proposals submitted by following six applicants and hereby Order that Agreements be signed with each of them:

- 1) Griffiss International Airport;
- 2) North Dakota Department of Commerce ;
- 3) State of Nevada;
- 4) Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi;
- 5) University of Alaska; and
- 6) Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

I am confident that these six test sites will allow for a wide variety of UAS research that will substantially contribute to UAS-NAS integration activities. The selected test sites offer over 20 test ranges that provide ample geographic and climatic diversity, well-located ground infrastructure, and strong research programs focused on key UAS research needs. The six test sites will provide research opportunities in ten distinct climatic zones and will allow for operations in a wide variety of weather, topographical and airspace conditions. In addition, the test sites will provide opportunities to conduct UAS research across the Mid-Western, North-Eastern, North-Western, Southern, and Western regions of the country.

This is the final Agency Order in this matter. Any review of this Order shall be sought in accordance with 49 U.S.C. §46110.

Issued December 30, 2013



Michael P. Huerta
FAA Administrator